

CLAIMS

1. A gaming machine for the playing of a game of chance wherein an outcome of said game of chance is determined by a predefined one of a plurality of payline patterns of indicia displayed on a display means by a game control module; said payline patterns formed of a selection of elements of a matrix of columns and rows and wherein the number of said elements forming any one payline pattern is greater than the number of columns of said matrix.
2. The gaming machine of claim 1 wherein said columns of said matrix are in the form of simulated reels divided peripherally into a plurality of elements; each said element displaying an indicia.
- 15 3. The gaming machine of claim 1 or 2 wherein said rows of said matrix are comprised of a number of displayed aligned elements of each of said reels.
4. The gaming machine of claim 2 or 3 wherein the number of said reels is five and the number of said rows is three.
- 20 5. The gaming machine of any one of claims 2 to 4 wherein said simulated reels are caused to display a spinning motion during a game; said reels coming to rest in a

randomly selected position under control of said game control module so as to display three elements of each reel.

6. The gaming machine of any one of claims 2 to 5 wherein
5 the number of said elements defining said predefined one of a plurality of payline patterns is one greater than said number of columns.
7. The gaming machine of any one of claims 1 to 6 wherein
10 the number of said elements defining said predefined one of said plurality of payline patterns lies in the range of one greater than said number of columns and the total of said elements in said matrix.
8. The gaming machine of any one of claims 1 to 7 wherein
15 said plurality of payline patterns is indicated to a player of said gaming machine by representations of said payline patterns on a front panel of said gaming machine.
9. The gaming machine of any one of claims 1 to 8 wherein
20 said game control module randomly selects a payline pattern from said plurality of payline patterns for each game played on said gaming machine.
10. The gaming machine of any one of claims 1 to 8 wherein said game control module randomly selects a payline

pattern from said plurality of payline patterns; said payline pattern maintained as a winning pattern until matched by a game played on said gaming machine.

11. The gaming machine of claim 9 or 10 wherein said selected payline pattern is indicated to a player of said game when said reels have come to rest by highlighting said elements corresponding to said selected payline pattern.
12. The gaming machine of claim 9 or 10 wherein said selected payline pattern is indicated to a player of said game when said reels have come to rest by a projected outline of said elements corresponding to said selected payline pattern.
13. The gaming machine of claim 12 wherein said projected outline is displayed on said display while said reels are spinning.
14. The gaming machine of any one of claims 2 to 13 wherein a player of a game may pre-select a payline pattern and wherein, if said payline pattern matches a pattern of indicia of said reels when come to rest, said player is awarded a prize.
15. The gaming machine of any one of claims 1 to 14 wherein said selected payline pattern of elements is

arranged so that in one column and one column only, at least two elements of said selected payline pattern have a common edge.

16. The gaming machine of any one of claims 1 to 14 wherein said selected payline pattern of elements is arranged so that in one row and one row only, at least two elements of said selected payline pattern have a common edge.
17. The gaming machine of any one of claims 1 to 14 wherein said selected payline pattern of elements is arranged so that none of said elements have a common edge.
18. The gaming machine of any one of claims 1 to 14 wherein said selected payline pattern of elements is arranged so that all of said elements have at least one edge common with another one of said elements.
19. A gaming machine according to anyone of claims 1 to 18 wherein said gaming machine is provided in addition to said display means with a secondary display means; said secondary display means adapted to the playing of a bonus game.
20. The gaming machine of claim 19 wherein at least one bonus game is conferred on a player of said gaming

machine in the event of a winning outcome display of a main game on said display means.

21. The gaming machine of any one of claims 1 to 21 wherein said elements of said matrix each comprise an element bounded by N-sides where N is an integer.
22. The gaming machine of claim 21 wherein adjacent elements in a column adjacent a first column are staggered in a vertical direction.
23. The gaming machine of claim 21 or claim 22 wherein said elements are aligned vertically in columns in said matrix.
24. The gaming machine of any one of claims 21 to 23 wherein N is selected from one of 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19 or 20.
25. The gaming machine of claim 24 wherein each said element includes a symbol located within its border.
26. The gaming machine of any one of claims 21 to 25 wherein selected sides of adjacent elements are maintained in a parallel, spaced apart relationship.
27. A gaming machine according to any one of claims 1 to 26 wherein said gaming machine is one of a plurality of linked gaming machines interactively linked to a jackpot system.

28. A plurality of linked gaming machines, each machine of the type claimed in any one of claims 1 to 26 and wherein a jackpot prize is awarded by said jackpot system when play of a game on one of said gaming machines results in a pattern of indicia matching a pre-selected payline pattern.

29. A method for the awarding of a prize to a player of a gaming machine provided with a display of indicia-bearing reels; said method including the steps of:

- (a) selecting at random one of a plurality of predefined payline patterns,
- (b) spinning said reels and causing said reels to stop so as to display a matrix of elements,
- (c) comparing said display of a matrix of elements with selected random ones of said predefined payline patterns,
- (d) awarding a prize according if selected random one of said predefined payline patterns corresponds to an at-rest disposition of said indicia-bearing reels.

30. The method claim 29 wherein at least one bonus game is conferred on a player of said gaming machine in the

event of a winning outcome display of a main game on said display means.

31. The method of any one of claims 29 to 30 wherein said elements of said matrix each comprise an element bounded by N-sides where N is an integer.
32. The method claim 31 wherein adjacent elements in a column adjacent a first column are staggered in a vertical direction.
33. The method of claim 31 or claim 32 wherein said elements are aligned vertically in columns in said matrix.
34. The method of any one of claims 31 to 33 wherein N is selected from one of 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19 or 20.
35. The method of claim 34 wherein each said element includes a symbol located within its border.
36. The method of any one of claims 31 to 35 wherein selected sides of adjacent elements are maintained in a parallel, spaced apart relationship.
37. The method of any one of claims 31 to 36 wherein said predefined payline pattern comprises a number of selected locations and indicia at least one greater than the number of said reels.

38. A method of awarding a jackpot prize to the player of a reel-based gaming machine and wherein said gaming machine is one of a linked plurality of gaming machines; said method including the steps of:

- (a) a game controller of each said gaming machine selecting at random one of a plurality of predefined payline patterns,
- (b) spinning said reels of each said gaming machine and causing said reels to stop so as to display a matrix of elements,
- (c) comparing said display of a matrix of elements of each of said gaming machine with selected random ones of said predefined payline patterns,
- (d) awarding said jackpot prize if selected random one of said predefined payline patterns corresponds to an at-rest disposition of said indicia-bearing reels of one of said gaming machines.

39. The method of claim 38 wherein said jackpot prize increases incrementally according to monitored volume of play on said linked plurality of said gaming machines.

40. The method of Claim 38 or 39 wherein said matrix of elements comprises elements bounded by N sides where N is an integer in the range 1 to 20.
41. The method of Claim 40 wherein each of said sides is straight.
42. A gaming machine as substantially herein described and with reference to the accompanying drawings.
43. A method of playing a gaming machine as herein described with reference to the accompanying drawings.